

Message Text

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TAGS: MARR, SCUL, PO

SUBJ: AZORES BASE AGREEMENT-EDUCATION PACKAGE

REF: (A) STATE 179138; (B) LISBON 3476

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY COMMENTS ON EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER-TRAINING PROJECT; INFORMATION ON NEW UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION; AND THOUGHTS CONCERNING POSSIBLE REVISIONS TO PROGRAM. END SUMMARY

1. PLACEMENT OF TEACHERS. TEACHER-TRAINEES WILL RETURN TO INSTITUTIONS THEY HAD BEEN WORKING IN WHEN THEY APPLIED FOR GRANTS. ORIGINAL INTENTION OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATION BEFORE COUP WAS THAT TRAINEES WOULD FORM CORE OF TEACHING STAFFS AT NINE NEW NORMAL SCHOOLS WHICH WERE TO HAVE BEEN CREATED IN 1973 UNDER TERMS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM ACT OF 1973. HOWEVER, AS OF THIS DATE NORMAL SCHOOLS HAVE NOT RPT NOT BEEN ESTABLISHED. OFFICIAL IN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SAYS TEACHER TRAINEES MAY RPT MAY BE ASKED TO JOIN FACULTIES OF NORMAL SCHOOLS IF AND WHEN THEY OPEN.

2. COMMENT: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION IS STILL SORTING ITSELF OUT. NORMAL SCHOOLS WERE CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM PROGRAM BY FORMER EDUCATION MINISTER VEIGA SIMAO. EMBASSY BELIEVES NEW MINISTER OF EDUCATION WILL ARRIVE AT SAME CONCLUSION. HOWEVER, ISSUE IS NOT ON FRONT BURNER IN MINISTRY AND FUNDS TO
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CREATE NEW INSTITUTIONS--INCLUDING NEW UNIVERSITIES--ARE IN

SHORT SUPPLY. END COMMENT.

3. TRAINEES' COMMENTS ON COURSES: DIFFICULT TO GENERALIZE SINCE FIRST BATCH HAS JUST RETURNED AND MOST OF THEM ARE OUT OF TOWN ON VACATION. HOWEVER, ON STRENGTH OF CONVERSATIONS WITH THREE RETURNED TEACHER-TRAINEES EMBASSY CAN REPORT THEY WERE SATISFIED WITH PROGRAM AND FOUND THEIR COURSES USEFUL AND VALUABLE. ALL EXPERIENCED SOME INITIAL DIFFCULTY IN ADJUSTING TO AMERICAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM. NONE SUGGESTED NEW AREAS OF STUDY.

4. NEW UNIVERSITIES: FOUR NEW UNIVERSITIES WERE CREATED UNDER EDUCATIONAL REFORM ACT OF 1973; THE NEW UNIVERSITY OF LISBON (NUL), THE UNIVERSITY OF THE MINHO (TO BE LOCATED IN BRAGA, WITH BRANCHES IN GUIMARES AND VIANA DO CASTELO); THE UNIVERSITY OF AVEIRO; AND THE UNIVERSITY OF EVORA.

5. AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION: SEE PART THREE OF ANNUAL PROGRAM PROPOSAL OF THE LUSO-AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROGRAM YEAR 1975 FOR AREAS OF SPECILIZATION OF NEW UNIVERSITY OF LISBON. OTHER UNIVERSITIES EXPECT TO OFFER BROAD RANGE OF COURSES. SPECIALITIES INCLUDE NAVAL CONSTRUCTION AT UNIVERSITY OF THE MINHO (VIANA DO CASTELO), ENGINEERING (AVEIRO), AND AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY (EVORA).

6. COMMENT: TO EMBASSY'S KNOWLEDGE, NEW UNIVERSITY OF LISBON IS ONLY ONE OF THE FOUR NEW UNIVERSITIES TO RECEIVE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS THUS FAR. ALLOCATION IS FRACTION OF WHAT WAS REQUESTED AND IS INTENDED ONLY TO ENABLE PLANNING TO CONTINUE. NUL HAD HOPED TO OPEN GRADUATE SCHOOL IN OCTOBER 1974, UNDERGRUDATE SCHOOL IN 1975. WITH MONEY DRYING UP AND PORTUGAL FACING SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, FUNDING OF NEW UNIVERSITIES IS IN SERIOUS JEOPARDY.

7. VEIGA SIMAO'S CONCEPT OF CREATING NEW UNIVERSITIES HAS COME UNDER ATTACK. HE REASONED THAT BY PROVIDING ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION TO EVER INCREASING NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NEW INSTITUTIONS WERE REQUIRED TO HANDLE THEM. OPPONENTS ARGUED THAT PORTUGAL LACKS QUALIFIED TEACHERS TO STAFF NEW UNIVERSITIES. FACT IS, VEIGA SIMAO'S ANALYSIS REVEALS THAT PRESENT UNIVERSITY SYSTEM CAN PROPERLY HANDELY ONLY 40,000 STUDENTS. IN ACADEMIC YEAR 1973-74 50,000 STUDENTS ENROLLED. IN ACADEMIC YEAR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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1974-75, 70,000 STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO APPLY FOR ENROLLMENT. IN ACADEMIC YEAR 1979-80, 150,000 STUDENTS WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE HIGHER EDUCATION. VEIGA SIMAO'S CONCLUSION: BUILD NEW UNIVERSITIES OR REDUCE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION. END SUMMARY.

8. THOUGHTS ON PROGRAM REVISIONS: AS REPORTED REFTEL B, PORTUGUESE APPEAR TO DESIRE EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM WHICH WOULD BE FOLLOW-ON TO PRESENT PROGRAM. IT IS SELF-EVIDENT THAT PORTUGAL

HAS DESPERATE NEED FOR TEACHERS. THERE IS, HOWEVER, A LIMIT TO AMOUNT OF TRAINING COUNTRY CAN ABSORB. TEACHERS CANNOT BE TWO PLACES AT ONE TIME. PERHAPS THIRTY TEACHERS TRAINING IN U.S. AT ONE TIME IS THEIR LIMIT. THAT IS MATTER FOR PORTUGUESE TO JUDGE, BUT EMBASSY DOUBTS ANNUAL LEVEL OF TEACHER-TRAINEES COULD GREATLY EXCEED NUMBER BEING SENT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 1974-75.

9. PORTUGAL NEEDS MONEY FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION. SOME MEMBERS OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ARE KNOWN TO OPPOSE PRESENT TEACHER-TRAINING PROJECT. THEY WOULD PREFER FUNDS BE SPENT ON BRICKS AND MORTAR. OTHERS WOULD LIKE TO BUY SOPHISTICATED HARDWARE--E.G. VISUAL AIDS AND COMPUTERS.

10. AN AREA NOT COVERED BY THE PRESENT PROJECT IS THE PREPARATION AND TRAINING OF JOURNALISTS, BOTH PRINT AND ELECTRONIC. THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT THIS ARE BE EXPLORED WITH PORTUGUESE NEGOTIATORS. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IS PROVIDING SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE FOR SOME 40 ASPIRING PORTUGUESE JOURNALISTS TO SPEND FOUR MONTHS STUDYING IN FRANCE. YOUNG PEOPLE IN PORTUGAL ARE SUDDENLY EXCITED BY THE IDEA OF BECOMING JOURNALISTS. THERE ARE NO UNIVERSITY-LEVEL SCHOOLS OF JOURNALISM IN PORTUGAL. NOTE: TWO OF THE BEST JOURNALISM SCHOOLS IN THE U.S. ARE AT TEXAS AND NORTHWESTERN, WHERE WE ALREADY HAVE CONTRACTS.

11. EMBASSY BELIEVES EMPHASIS ON TRAINING IN THE U.S. IS RIGHTLY PLACED. TO AVOID MISUNDERSTANDING, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THE LANGUAGE OF EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE SECTION OF ANY NEW AGREEMENT SHOULD BE TIGHTENED. SECRETARY ROGERS' LETTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER PATRICIO OF DECEMBER 9, 1971 SAYS THAT "THE U.S. AGREES, WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS OF APPLICABLE U.S. LEGISLATION AND APPROPRIATIONS, TO HELP PORTUGAL IN ITS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS BY PROVIDING... A GRANT OF DOLS 1 MILLION TO FUND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SELECTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF PORTUGAL."

12. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT WORDS "EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS" ARE TOO FUZZY AND COULD BE INTERPRETED BY PORTUGUESE TO INCLUDE LOCAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS AS WELL AS THE ACQUISITION OF INDIGESTIBLE AND HENCE ULTIMATELY WORTHLESS HARDWARE.

13. DEPARTMENT DOUBTLESS RECALLS THAT RUI PATRICIO DISMISSED PRESENT PROGRAM AS A "SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM" AND POINTED OUT THAT IN ANY CASE, THE MONEY WAS BEING SPENT IN THE U.S. HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM WAS ACCURATE, IF NOT HIS CHARACTERIZATION OF IT. THIS CRITICISM COULD SURFACE AGAIN AND FOR THE SAME REASONS. WE NONETHELESS BELIEVE THE TYPE OF PROGRAM WE HAVE NOW IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF PORTUGAL AND IN THE

LONG TERM INTERESTS OF THE U.S.
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